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Old Meigs County Court House  
Chester  
Meigs County  
Ohio

HABS No. O-642

HABS  
OHIO  
53-CHEST  
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction  
120 South Third Street  
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

## OLD MEIGS COUNTY COURT HOUSE

MASS  
OHIO  
Chest

Location: Chester, Meigs County, Ohio

Present Owner: Meigs County Pioneer and Historical Society,  
Pomeroy, Ohio

Brief Statement of Significance: This building was erected 1823 and restored in 1953.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1823; occupied 1824-1841.
2. Architect, builder, suppliers, etc.: Records show that Lawrence Jinks was paid \$10.00 for plans for public buildings in Chester. See copies of documents under Part I, C, of this report.
3. Notes on alterations and additions: This building was photographed by Perry E. Borchers in 1951, when it was standing empty and unused. It was reported in the process of restoration in 1953, as a project of the Meigs County Pioneer and Historical Society.

B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure: From The Ohio Guide, compiled by workers of the Writers Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of Ohio, Third Printing with Corrections, 1946, page 441: "Chester (670 alt. 147 pop.), dozes on the Shade River, but from 1822 to 1841 it had a brief prosperity while serving as the seat of Meigs County. The Old Meigs County Courthouse and Jail, starkly red, stand on a hill (L) facing the highway."

C. Supplemental Material: The following is quoted from information supplied by A. V. Howell, President of the Meigs County Pioneer and Historical Society:

## MEIGS COUNTY'S FIRST COURT HOUSE AND JAIL.

September 30, 1822.

Commissioners' Meeting.

Meeting held at the home of Levi Steadman in Orange township; present, Samuel Downing, Philip Jones and William Alexander.

The Commissioners proceeded to take into view the necessity and propriety of erecting public buildings at the Seat of Justice.

After consideration thereon, it was concluded to build a jail of hewed logs, one log set edgewise and one flat- the flooring of the criminal room also of logs with a stone plate floor below, the building to be two story, 20 feet square outside, the upper floor a tier of hewed logs and planked.

Jailer house adjoining 1-1/2 stories high, twenty feet by sixteen.

Levi Steadman and William Weldon appointed to view the grounds and make a plat and estimate of the probable cost of the above named buildings. And they are also requested to form a plat of a suitable Court House and an estimate of the cost, both in wood and brick and to report thereon to the next meeting of the Board to be held at same place on the 14th day of October ensuing.

October 14, 1822 Meeting of County Commissioners.

Resolve that the Court House and Jail to be erected at the Seat of Justice be built in the following manner, to wit:

Court House, 36 by 38 feet on the ground, 16 feet high in the walls; 3 windows in the east end, one of which to be in the center; two windows in each side and 2 in the west end, the lower story to be nine feet in the clear.

In the upper story to be two windows in the west end and one in each side about eight feet from the westerly corners.

All the windows calculated for 24 lights, 10 by 12. The walls to be brick one foot thick; to be floored in the second story 15 feet beginning at the west end, the joists to be 9 inches in depth. The roof to be hipped and well timbered and sheeted and covered with good pine or chestnut shingles, 18 inches in length and 1/2 inch thick and laid 6 inches to the weather. Good white oak or locust timbers to be placed for the lower floor. Doors to be eight feet high and four feet wide with oval windows over front door.

Jail to be erected as before entered.

Second Meeting, October 1822.

Resolved that the following alterations be made in the Court House; height as now stipulated by the former records are sixteen feet, altered to eighteen feet.

Windows to be 8 by ten glass; walls in the lower story to be the length of two bricks, the upper story to be the length and breadth of a brick; back door to be reduced in height one foot; the girth or girders between the first and second stories placed 15 feet from the west end to be good white oak 12 inches by 16 wide supported by 2 sufficient posts or pillars.

Ordered that the Clerk give notice at least in four townships in the county that the Commissioners attend at the Seat of Justice on the third monday in January next (1823) and put at public auction and strike off to the lowest bidder, the building of the Court House, said will be in parts or in the whole to suit purchasers.

(NOTE: - The construction contracts were sold in several parts and not as a whole)

Resolved that William Weldon and Samuel Branch be a committee to superintend the public building.

At the next meeting John C. Bestow was added to the building committee.

(The Court House) to have a cupalo on top of said building of suitable size, with a suitable cornice around the eaves; the under-

pinning to be two feet above the surface, to be laid with stone, said two feet to be range work.

December 1823.

Bills paid on construction of Court House:

Abel Chase, extra labor - - - - -	\$195.55
Stephen Shepherd, extra bricks - - - - -	30.00
Lawrence Jinks, plans for public buildings	10.00
Randal Stivers, bricks and hauling	16.00
John C. Bestow, services as committee	10.75
William Weldon, same	8.00
Samuel Branch, services as committee and leveling grounds for court house	15.00
Richard Weldon, part pay on building	240.00
William Hull, extra labor above his contract	50.00
William Hull, balance on first contract	97.00
Abel Chase, balance on his contract	551.50
Josiah Brabeh, leveling ground for C.H.	4.00
Fenn Robinson, same	3.00
Lemuel Thorn, same	.75
Jacob Cowdery same	4.00
David Barber glass and nails for C. H.	19.65

(NOTES ON THE ABOVE RECORDS)

The brick used in building the first Meigs County court house were made near the location of the building and were eight inches long and four inches wide, a dimension used at this time for most building brick. Paving brick are much larger.

The Court House above described served Meigs county from 1824 until 1841 when the county seat was moved to Pomeroy. The court house, first used in 1841, is still in use, although there have been some additions made to the original structure.

The above statistics are taken from official documents and submitted by

A. V. Howell, President,  
Meigs County Pioneer and Historical Society,  
Box 333, Pomeroy, Ohio.

Prepared by Perry E. Borchers  
February 1959

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

No architectural data has been compiled on this building because the photographs contained herein are now the only record of the structure prior to a reconstruction which may or may not have been well planned and executed.

Prepared by Perry E. Borchers  
February 1959